CONCLUSION

It is a challenging task to interpret all the major novels of R.K. Narayan from a Marxist perspective because most of the critics have interpreted him as a conservative writer. However, the world of Malgudi, which is the fictional landscape in Narayan’s novels, is a complex world where drastic changes have taken place. In the first chapter, an attempt has been made to go through the Marxist critical theory before studying or interpreting major novels of R.K. Narayan in the Marxist perspective. Marxism has generated a rich tradition of literacy and cultural criticism. Many branches of modern criticism— including historicism, feminism, deconstruction, postcolonial, and cultural criticism are indebted to the insights of Marxism. It is not only a political, economic and social theory but also a form of practice in all these domains.

The main concepts of Marxism can be summarized as, the materialistic conception of history is characterized by a number of features. It is the activity and the conditions of material production, not mere ideas, which determine the structure of society and nature of individuals. Law, art, religion and mortality are an efflux of these material relations. The evolution of division of labour results in the concentration of private property, a conflict between individual and communal interests and estrangement or alienation of social activity. All struggles within the state are euphemisms for the real struggle between classes. It is this struggle which generates social change. Once the technologically assisted capitalist accumulation, concentration and world expansion have led to a world of sharply contrasting wealth and poverty, working classes will become conscious of their historical role. Capitalism itself will yield to a communism which will do away with private property and base itself on human need rather than the greed of a minority for increasing profit. The exploitation of women, an intrinsic feature of capitalist economics, will also be abolished along with private property and the family as economic unit.

It is important to recognize that the connection between Marx’s canon and Marxism has always been dialectical. The latter has always striven to modify, extend, and adapt the former to changing circumstances rather than treating it as definitive and complete. Marxism is not somehow a finished and static system but has been continually modified according to changing historical circumstance.
Marxist aesthetics is a theory of aesthetics based on or derived from the theories of Karl Marx. It involves a dialectical approach to the application of Marxism to the cultural sphere, specifically areas related to taste such as art, beauty etc. Marxist believes that economic and social conditions affect every aspect of an individual's life, from religious beliefs to legal systems to cultural frameworks. The role of art is not only to present such conditions truthfully, but also to seek to improve them.

Marx and Engels produced no systematic theory of literature and art. In their opinion the essence, origin, development and social role of art could only be understood through analysis of social system as a whole, within which the economic factor- the development of productive forces in complex interaction with production relations, plays the decisive role. So, art is one of the forms of social consciousness. The fact that the level of development of society and its social structure determine the content of artistic genre was seen by Marx as the main reason that art in different periods never repeats itself. For Marx and Engels, art was an important weapon in the ideological struggle between classes. Art should express what is typical about a class or peculiar intersection of ideological circumstances.

In this research work there is a discussion about the some of the major Marxist intellectuals of stature of George Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton, who immensely contributed to the development of Marxist critical standards and Marxist aesthetics.

Lukacs argued that reification is the relation between people that takes on the character of the thing and attains a phantom of objectively. Literature provides a critical understanding of underlying social and historical processes by revealing the contradictions of age. The work of art is subordinated to a purposeful design located outside of art. The author is merely the medium through which the laws of history came to expression.Ideology manifests itself in various ways in all stages of life. Knowledge of objective reality is possible, but only if it goes beyond the reflection of immediate reality.

Gramsci has adopted certain fundamental categories for his analysis of culture and society: hegemony, ideology and division between state and civil society. Culture is neither a simple reflection of the economic base nor a separate entity. The relation between base and superstructure is one of reciprocity. Gramsci’s notion of ideology suggests that man
acquires consciousness of structural conflicts on the level of ideologies. He states that dominant classes maintain their position not only through acts of coercion but also through symbolic action which renews and recreates social order. Hegemony is the nexus of material and ideological instruments through which the dominant classes maintain their power. Hegemony mediates between the ruling ideas and the subjects. The material sphere is allied with a superstructure of ideas. These ideas are institutionalized in the civil society.

For Gramsci, ‘the school as a positive educative function and the courts as a repressor and negative education function, are the most important state activities in the development of ideologies. He defines two types of intellectuals— the organic and traditional intellectuals. Gramsci states that literature participates in the struggle for hegemony in society.

Raymond Williams stressed the contribution of cultural forms to economic and political development. He undertook a critical review of earlier Marxist theories and offered his own analysis of fundamental Marxist notions such as ideology, hegemony, base and superstructure. His own cultured materialism attempts to integrate Marxist conception of language and literature. Williams shifted the basis of criticism from purely textual exercise to the material world. He stresses the connection and interaction between social and historical processes. Society and historical events cannot be categorically abstracted from individual and individual wills. Mind of artist must be seen as materially conditioned. He explains hegemony to relate it to the distribution of power and influence. He explains that sometimes direct connections cannot be found between the base and superstructure. These is also mediation between base and superstructure, but not a direct reflection.

Williams states that base should be regarded as process not a state. The theory of culture is the study of relationship between elements in a whole way of life. Ideology is incorporated through educational institutes and the family. A selective tradition passed off as the tradition. Culture, for Raymond Williams, is not something monolithic whole, but it refers to classes in a class-society.

Eagleton argues that all imaginative production is social production. Literature designates a privileged order of values defined and realized within certain institutional discourse. The social is the matrix within which all other terms are fleshed and shaped.
Marxist critics have tried to discover the synchrony of structure, thus enabling a deciphering of the outline of an informing structure of social consciousness in the aesthetics of text itself.

Texts do not reflect historical reality, they work on ideology to convey the effect of real. Thus, ideology is the system of representations that shape the individual mental picture of lived experience. For Eagleton, culture is the negation of all particular forms in the name of the totality which is void because it is no more than a totality of negated silenced and marginalized moments. Eagleton argues that in the contemporary debates on modernity modernism and post-modernism, culture would seem a key category for the analysis and understanding of late capitalist society. Eagleton accepts the potential of deconstruction and post-structuralism to undermine absolute forms of knowledge and all certainties. However, deconstruction for Eagleton denies objectivity and the material interests.

*Swami and Friends* has been studied as a critique of educational system, it has been tried to explore how the so-called liberal bourgeois education institution acts as a center of power, harassing and repressing the pupils. Education is a social institute and ideological process. The main aim is to examine how the school education introduced by the colonists and so-called bourgeois is used as cultural capital and a pedagogy of the oppressed to dominate and suppress the innocent students.

Schools must be seen as institutes marked by some complex of contradictory cultures that characterize the dominant society. Schools are social sites constituted by a complex of dominated and subordinate cultures, each characterized by the power they have to define and legitimate a specific view of reality. Teachers and others interested in education must come to understand how the dominant culture functions at all levels of schooling to disconfirm the cultural experiences of innocent children.

The body of knowledge transmitted to school children was situated within the specific power relations constructed the dominant group. In India under British rule, education was geared to the interests of the bourgeois power and never to the interests of Indian people. Academic institutions in India were more than just sites of social and cultural reproductions, these were centers where the ideological struggle between Indian traditional knowledge and dominant European knowledge was played out.
Atmosphere of schools, together with the strict home discipline under the orthodox father, forced Swami, the protagonist of the novel to leave Malgudi only to return a day or two after, with a remarkable change of heart. The novel shows the inability of the child to cope with the examination system, his inadequate involvement in the process of learning is shown to be due to unreal and mechanical system of education.

It is made clear that parents encourage or put enormous pressure on their children to do well in school, not simply because of their interest in their children's academic achievements but also because of their personal social security and fear of having a child who does not get good notes. A failure in examination brings disgrace not only to a child but also to entire family. Marks in exam determine the achievement of a student in his school.

Education functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it. A teacher in bourgeois educational institute plays the role of an agent for incorporation of dominant culture. Therefore, in a classroom situation, where his role should be primarily that of teaching, his function involves much more than theoretical instructions. But being the part of bourgeois system, a teacher must display the qualities of how an educated person behaves or should behave and at the same time, should have the grasp of the subject he is transmitting to his pupils. Pedagogy and methodology, reward and punishment system replicated a hierarchical system. This novel shows that teacher and pupil like Swami conflict each other in the school with an original conflict of desires and however much that conflict may be reduced in amount or however much it may be hidden it still remains.

Children are made to learn various ways in which culture, power, ideology work as apparatus of domination to shape the society in order to maintain the hierarchal division between dominant and subordinate group. It becomes evident that both places-school as well as home are not meant for Swami to move freely.

The participation of Swami and his friends in the freedom movement exposes some of the deplorable aspect of the existing educational system. The utter disregard for their teachers by school boys is largely due to some basic flaws in the system of education, which is conceived by British and implemented by bourgeois class, is entirely unsuited to the needs of Indian society.
School education suffers many oddities, the principle flaws are: the dread of corporal punishment, increasing load of text books, bigotry of the Christian teachers, sadistic devices of admissions and fear of examination. *Swami and Friends* also offers an interesting study of the problem of growing indiscipline and unruly behaviour in school campus.

Through *Swami and Friends*, Narayan strongly underscores the need for psychological approaches in the education of children. The teacher’s ignorance of the child sentiments and their significance in latter’s life only widens the rift between them. Often the confrontations compel the young ones to shun the school at a premature age. So, it is required that mental and physical faculties of a child should be allowed to develop in an atmosphere of freedom and friendliness.

When Swami was dismissed from the Board High School, he had nowhere to go, he remembered his home, a place with a stern and stubborn father and school with a tyrant headmaster, who forced him to leave Malgudi. But, Swami despite his deep desire to realize his personal ambitions cannot afford to live in isolation for long.

But the question is how one can realistically expect a teacher to interact differently with his pupils when his own training was mainly based on authoritative education rather than transmission of knowledge and skills. How can teachers and parents empower children to visualize a better future without fearing that they might not fit in a class society. This novel proves that schools are merely bourgeois educational institutes where students are harassed physically, mentally and psychologically and fail to provide all round development of students personality. This type of distraction from central aim of such educational institute is responsible for the type of behaviour shown by Swaminathan and his friends.

In *The Bachelor of Arts*, Chandran, the protagonist, achieves what he aims in life. But he finds it difficult to come to terms with the different layers of consciousness, which is socially conditioned. This is a story of romantic illusions of the young generation and their persistence in spite of lessons learned from hard experiences of life.

Chandran is vehemently opposed to the mercantile interests of majority of people around him. His main predicament is that he does not know how to apply his knowledge and energies to the fulfillment of his deep-rooted ambition for learning, love and marriage. He
undergoes varied experiences in his journey from college to domestic life. But every time he encounters new feelings and experiences. He gets very puzzled, feeling helpless in understanding the various traditions in a culture of society.

Chandran being modern and educated is not able to set himself in the traditional set up of society. He develops into a complex character, standing on the threshold of unconventionality with occasional pulls of tradition. We see him undergoing various experiences of life. He sometimes tries to oppose the traditions of his culture, but not finding any satisfactory solution in protest or opposition, he adheres to dominant culture of the society. He wants to lead a life free from rigidities and restrictions.

His irrational way of falling in love with Malathi shows his limited nature of experiences and helps him to grow. His being in love brings out many qualities in Chandran and these help more and more to place him in the adult world. Even the crisis in love which follows acts as catalyst on his personality and helps him to mature in the end, to take a new illustration.

Chandran tries to challenge traditional social set up through his love affair. But for Chandran’s parents, tradition is an actively shaping force. While violating social conventions Chandran tries to marry Malathi, but he fails. He runs away from his home and becomes a Sanyasi. But he is honest enough to realize that his renunciation is without spiritual motive; it is just a revenge on society, circumstances and destiny. He holds Malathi responsible for everything.

After his return to Malgudi, he is not able to lead a quiet life. But relationship between Chandran and his parents undergoes transformation. Since the Malathi episode Chandran tries to keep himself busy and happy in agency work. On being asked by his father about his interest in new marriage proposal, he discusses this matter with his friend Mohan. It becomes his first adult attempt to face reality squarely and he tries to understand himself. It helps to realize that he is not averse to marriage now as he was three years ago.

Chandran’s philosophy that love is an illusion is disproved when he falls in love at first sight with the girl of his parents’ choice. At last Chandran learns to behave like adult towards Malathi. With his marriage with Sushila, love becomes a reality for him. His earlier
negative attitudes get replaced by more positive ones. He feels more secure now that he has learnt how to make the world of his dreams correspond to the world of reality, though at last he is able to achieve what he aims in life. We observe that different layers of his consciousness are socially conditioned. He grows up and gets matured to fit himself into adult world.

In R.K. Narayan’s *The Dark Room*, the novel portrays the condition and atmosphere in the family of Ramani, the office Secretary of England Insurance Company. This is a story of plight of a middle class housewife Savitri who, though not discontent with her life, is an object of her husband Ramani’s tyrannical and unsympathetical behaviour.

Ramani is very domineering and cynical in his ways and he governs his house according to his own sweet will. We have studied this novel from Marxist feminist perspective keeping in center the protagonist Savitri’s marriage and her husband’s adulterous affairs with Shanta Bai, a modern woman.

Marxist feminists tend to draw upon Marx’s base-superstructure model of society to show that gender discriminations are entirely functions of economic rather than anatomical and other factors. From Marxist feminist perspective, women’s oppression is part and parcel of economic mode of production.

The novel portrays the emotional starvation and mental agony of a woman, who is torn between her deep attachment to her home and children and her haunting desire for freedom. The ultimate triumph of the former is achieved after a great deal of suffering, but it is only a deceptive victory of Savitri, who is destined to lead a shattered and partial existence even after it.

Ramani is the representative of patriarchal system. The novel shows that marriage is viewed differently by a man and this necessity has never brought about a condition of reciprocity between them. Ramani’s love for Savitri is like one’s love for one’s possessions. This diplomatic temperament and chauvinistic attitude makes Ramani view Savitri as a piece of property of which he is a proud possessor. Savitri, being beautiful, adds to his male pride.

But Ramani’s involvement with a woman employee Shanta Bai becomes instrumental in leaving her house. Shanta Bai’s character stands in sharp contrast to traditional wives. Her modernity and independence are compromised by the depiction of
her as a woman dedicated to achieve her ends through feminine wills rather feminist self-sufficiency.

Gradually, Savitri’s mind wakes up to all realizations. She sees clearly that women themselves are responsible for their conditions by being financially dependent on husbands. Her leaving home involves a repudiation of traditional role of Savitri, who effectively becomes a new woman through this transgressive act. But now she tries to commit suicide and is saved by Mari and Ponni. But anxiety about her children and a feeling of homesickness brings her back to her house and its routine life. Ramani shows no concern for his wife.

The relationship between them as husband and wife has already lost its meaning. Ramani may feel triumphant at Savitri’s return, but he loses her love and conviction as a wife towards him.

Marxist feminist critics suggest that education and employment can only help a woman to fill in some gap that exists between two sexes and can help her to attain freedom. For emancipation of woman, her economic independence is very important. After the study of Savitri’s character from Marxist feminist perspective, we can say that gender biases can only be done away when woman is allowed to feel and be regarded as an individual. The character of Savitri raises a significant Marxist feminist issue that the economic independence of woman is necessary in order to assert her independent personality.

In the novel, The English Teacher, the research is focused on the post-colonial treatment of the novel. In this novel, colonial rule plays the main role. Krishnan is a teacher of English in Albert Mission College. Being deeply rooted in indigenous culture, he is unable to derive a job satisfaction from teaching.

He finds English as a language of colonial domination. But he is caught into an odd situation that he has to teach the same language that he hates. Krishnan’s tragic story is the story of the spiritual agony and anguish of a learned, sensitive and imaginative modern Indian who is an unhappy blend of a revolutionary and uncompromising idealist having his roots firmly embedded in native tradition. Krishnan resists against the colonized culture, and the type of education being imparted to the students fills him with a sense of disgust. The study of the novel The English Teacher in the light of post-colonialism reveals that language
is the fundamental site for postcolonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in the language.

The construction of English literary education is part of the colonial cultural design. Krishnan is aware of the fact that a colonial language gives access to authority and a perception of a certain form of social being. Krishnan is not ignorant of the aesthetic value of English literature and is not opposed to teaching it as a matter of pride. In post-colonial context, the language is a tool which has meaning according to the way in which it is used. Language is an important cultural capital and emerges out of the conflict and struggle. Language functions not simply as a device for reporting experience, but also defines experience of its speaker. A post-colonial reading of R.K. Narayan’s novel The English Teacher would reveal that he endeavors to formulate a synthesis between the Indian element and the colonial one. Narayan suggests that native people like Krishnan should violate purest conception of the English language and insert some new expressions suiting the Indian context. Acceptance of English language in its Indianized form is the only way for Krishnan to be in tune with the world. Krishnan visualizes a new pattern called ‘The Leave Alone System’ of education. Acceptance of hybrid culture by colonized people like Krishnan is the only pragmatic method of existence.

The amalgamation of three alternatives e.g. to become willing servant of the imperialism, to accept the past without allowing it to prevent future development and nativism is more effective for colonized like Krishnan to see his own history as an aspect of history of all subjugated men and women and comprehends the complex truth of his own social and historical situation. This formulation is consistent with Said’s assertion of prevalence of cultural hybridity and multiple identities and need to accept their reality. All cultures and societies construct identity out of a dialect of self and other. Identity is so crucial to Said because the identity of a people determines the manner in which they organize knowledge. Identity is not static.

R.K. Narayan’s The Financial Expert is a study in material consciousness. Margayya, the protagonist of the novel, is the product of inferiority complex. To relive himself from the sense of inferiority due to his lower status in the society, he wants to acquire and accumulate wealth. He thinks that only with wealth he can attain a respectable position in society. Margayya is basically the product of bourgeois society where accumulation of
personal wealth is considered to be the highest goal of life. The various changes and development in the financial career of Margayya from a small financer to the richest banker of Malgudi shows his tendency for constant revolutionizing the instruments of production and relation of production.

Marxist interpretation of Margayya's relationship with his wife, son and brother clearly indicates that familial relations of people like Margayya are not based on personal love and affection, but on money.

Margayya represents the bourgeoisie class, which has enough wealth but suffers from an inferiority complex on account of their lack of higher education. Margayya thoroughly utilized his wealth, power for converting his dreams, which are related to his son. Being rich, Margayya has converted the services of teachers and astrologers into his paid wage-labourers.

Study of novel The Financial Expert shows that Margayya is a man who is not able to understand that in bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality while the living person is dependent and has no individuality. People like Margayya are the products of class-antagonism based on social status of a person due to his economic position.

In R.K. Narayan's novel Waiting for the Mahatma, there is a dialectical relationship between physical love and idealist Gandhian ideology. The novel, though Gandhian in theme, but the dialectical relationship is explored in the characters of Sriram and Bharati. Against the vast background of national struggle for freedom, with Mahatma occupying center stage, the love story of Sriram and Bharati provides moments of tenderness, romance, disappointment, anguish and finally consummation.

It is argued that R.K. Narayan though not influenced by Gandhian philosophy and he tried to keep neutrality from politics. But it is also true that no writer can keep himself inert from socio-political changes of time. So, we trace certain Gandhian attitudes in this novel when we study this novel in the light of Marxian philosophy. We find that Sriram adopts Gandhian philosophy only for the attainment of Bharati's love, which is ultimately materialistic in nature. Sriram finds his new love for Bharati. In order to remain near to Bharati, he decides to work for Mahatma Gandhi. Sriram is asked to seek Gandhi's
permission for their marriage and to give an undertaking to abide by the rules of conduct of a Gandhian.

Narayan’s obvious concern in *Waiting for the Mahatma* seems to be with how the adolescent Sriram reacts to the events with Bharati rather than Gandhi, serving as guiding spirit around to shape and mould his mind to maturity. Sriram has not understood what the whole non-violent, non-cooperation movement is about. His is the path of blind obedience, But his is not merely a young man’s pursuit for Bharati but his attraction for Bharati signifies his personal search for a frame of reference for life and Bharati is an agent for this.

Apparently at the root of Sriram’s patriotic fervor, there is nothing to suggest any special love for a particular cult. But due to his love for Bharati, Sriram too is genuinely drawn towards the Mahatma and starts identifying himself with the cause without really appreciating its full implications.

In the end, Gandhiji okeys their marriage but with an additional responsibility that Bharati be mother and father to thirty children, which she gladly takes upon herself. So, we observe that Gandhi does not seem to inspire Shriram, except as a means to secure Bharati for his bride. This reflects the dialectical relationship between physical love and idealist Gandhian ideology.

Raju in R.K. Narayan’s novel *The Guide* seems to be a man in pursuit of selfishness and gratification. His view of the world is very superficial in so far as he cares only for glamorous position. We can establish a special kind of analogy between Margayya in *The Financial Expert* and Raju in *The Guide*. Consciousness of both these character is materialistically conditioned. Like Margayya in *The Financial Expert*, Raju’s life also shows that the way people act and think is determined in the final analysis by the way they get their living: the foundation of any society is its economic system and therefore economic change is the driving force of history.

Marxist concept that consciousness of an individual is determined by his social status in the society and change in the social status of a person is directly responsible for change in his attitude, ideas, opinions. His quick adjustment to the part of tourist-guide, business-manager and sadhu falls in line with similar improvisations done throughout the life. In pursuit of fame, money and love, he also neglects his family.
He despises all that stands for the old and traditional ways of life. His selfishness reaches its heights with the arrival of Marco and Rosie, the husband and wife. The arrival of Rosie and her ill-matched husband Marco changes the complexion of Raju’s life. He is deeply infatuated by Rosie’s beauty so he supports Rosie’s passion for dance. Emotionally starved Rosie falls an easy prey to the shrewd and crafty designs of Raju. Raju takes her to his home and carves out the career of a public dancer for Rosie. Her successful performance brings him a large fortune.

At this stage, Raju discards society with gesture of arrogance and treats it with the scantiest attention. Raju considers himself master of Rosie, the dancer. For Raju, money is the only bond between him and Rosie. Further a shift in his economic status is implied in the shift to large house. Raju feels proud of his achievements in managing all the affairs very efficiently.

Rosie reaches the climax of her popularity in a very short period. But for Raju, monetary gains are more important than Rosie’s appreciation. But his relationship with Rosie is neither sanctified nor legalized. That Raju is not an ideal householder is an accepted fact. Whatever else it may be, his relationship with Rosie is not what it ought to be and definitely not what Rosie expected it to be. Drunk with money and power Raju loses contact with Rosie’s heart. Later on he realizes that it was his love for money that landed him in trouble. Raju himself becomes responsible for the abrupt end of Rosie’s career.

Raju's meanness is exposed when he forges Rosie’s signature for misappropriating her jewellery which lands him into prison. This action of Raju gives a great emotional setback and jolt to Rosie. After his release from jail a new phase in Raju’s life begins. Rustic people of Mangla village take him for a holy man. So, transition from Rosie’s business manager to holy guru is rather the outcome of a compelling and inescapable situation but not of voluntary option. His decision to stay at Mangla is more of a necessity to him than a choice. Asceticism is thrust upon him which he accepts because it suits his present condition.

He is delighted to see his popularity among ignorant villagers who respect him as a scared man, thus a regular supply of food is assured. This is what Raju wants at this stage of his life. Raju’s selfishness is clearly depicted, when he has sudden craving for bonda while discussing the Bhagavad Gita to audience. He is forced to undertake the fast unto death.
Raju dies as a ruined man, not because he wanted to die, but circumstances so conspire that the only alternative before him is to become an unwilling martyr.

So, at every stage of his life-shop-keeper, tourist, guide, business-manager and saint, Raju remains true to himself, caring for himself and his existence. All incidents of his life depicts his pursuance of selfishness as a value. His journey from shop-keeper to spiritual saint highlights the Marxism proposition that ideas, views and conceptions, change with change in his material existence as base and superstructures are inter-related.

The study of R.K. Narayan’s major novels in the light of Marxism helps in exploring the new aspects which are not explored earlier by any critic.